City of Troy

Materials from the
September 6-7, 2002 Retreat
The High Performance Governing Body

August 29, 2002

To: Governing Body and City Manager
Fr: John Nalbandian, Professor
Re: High Performance Governing Body Retreat Agenda

Thank you all for spending the time on the phone talking with me. I appreciate the investment you have indicated in the work planned for Friday evening and Saturday. I have prepared an agenda based on what I heard in the phone conversations, in various documents I have read including your June retreat notes, and in conversation with the city manager and staff.

Friday evening—6-8:30

- Dinner
- Get acquainted stories
- Brief outline of high performance governing body (see handout attached)
- Handout on Challenging Tasks for High Performance Governing Bodies (Exercise)

Saturday—8:30-4:00

1. Conducting more effective meetings
    a. Goal--Identify ways to improve meetings and establish responsibility for implementing planned steps
    b. Method (review notes from June strategic goal retreat)
        i.   Discuss what presently contributes to effectiveness of your meetings
        ii. Identify and prioritize areas of concern
        iii. Identify steps to enhance effectiveness
        iv. Establish responsibility for implementing steps
        v.   Establish date to evaluate progress

2. Role of the governing body
    a. Goal--To develop a common understanding of the governing body's role and areas where governing body effectiveness c an be improved
    b. Method
        i.   Review and discuss handout on Challenging Tasks for High Performance Governing Bodies
        ii. Identify areas of concern and discuss steps for improvement
        iii. Establish date to evaluate progress

3. Relationship between governing body and staff
    a. Goal—To establish an agreed upon list of governing body and staff expectations of one another
    b. Method
        i.   Governing body and staff each list expectations the one group has of the other, including areas of concern
        ii. Establish date to review progress is living up to agreement

Handouts attached:

1. Characteristics of High Performance Governing Body
2. Challenging Tasks for High Performance Governing Body
3. Notes about meeting effectiveness from your last retreat

Handouts to be distributed at the meeting:

1. Cedar Rapids, Iowa, norms of effective council behavior
2. City of Tucson iceberg model
3. Psychological Contract exercise form

John Nalbandian
Department of Public Administration
University of Kansas

Summary of High Performing Governing Body

Characteristic	Obstacles	Steps to Take
Willingness to deal with difficult problems	Value conflicts	• Identify values and understand council's role as community building • Build council's capacity
Ability or capacity to deal with difficult problems	Unproductive working conditions	• Depersonalize issues • Establish vision and set goals • Build team expectations and teamwork • Schedule regularly retreats to assess effectiveness • Develop effective relationship with staff
Effective relationship with staff	• Council that does not work as a team • Diverse perspectives of council and staff	• Team building • Become aware of differences between council and staff perspectives • Develop and encourage translator role

John Nalbandian, University of Kansas

John Nalbandian
August 29, 2002

Challenging Tasks for High Performance Governing Bodies

- Build a consensus in the governing body resulting in a legislative agenda that articulates community aspirations

- Develop respect for administrative staff and understand how to engage staff's full capacity and commitment

- With the help of staff, integrate constituent services with the governing body's primary goal of policy development

- Fulfill an oversight responsibility without becoming mired in "administrivia"

DEBRIEFING NOTES FROM SPRING 2002 CITY OF TROY PLANNING SESSION ON JUNE 13, 2002

I.   Objective of the Meeting

    A.   Review current planning processes and goals.

    B.   Identify enhancements to these processes/goals.

    C.   Confirm next steps in the planning process.
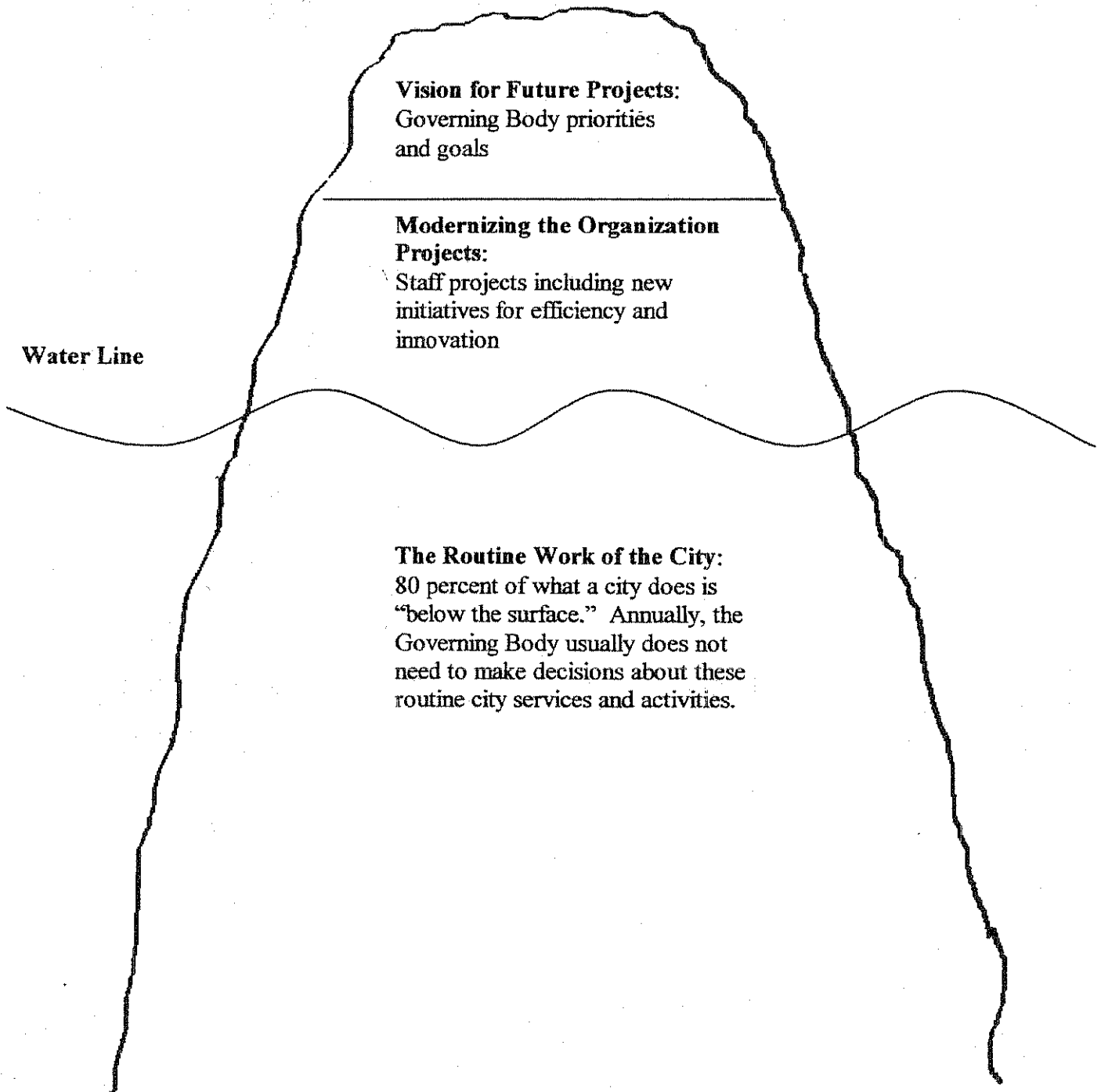
    D.   Prepare for meetings with Dr. Nalbandian.

A.   Strong support for asking Dr. Nalbandian for recommendations on the obstacles to effective decision-making identified during this planning meeting, including:

- Ensuring priority topics are addressed early in the meeting.

- More effectively managing feedback from constituents, particularly those who have taken the time to participate in the scheduling process, vs. those with "last minute items."

- Effectively balancing the timely evaluation of topics, while also ensuring that they are thoroughly researched by staff.

- How, or should, we enforce strict time limits (5 minutes)?

- How can we better balance responsiveness to constituents and effective meeting [time] management?

- Carver governance, vs. current practices within the City of Troy – include City Council, City Manager and attorney, as well as the entire strategic planning process (i.e., with regard to implications identified by Dr. Nalbandian).

- How do we respond to "incorrect comments" without extending the discussion (i.e., if an individual concludes their 5-minute commentary with the [incorrect] statement, "and I am really upset that you are going to be closing Sylvan Glen Golf Course!).

- What is the appropriate information from staff and legal that should be provided to Council? Can general parameters be established so that City Council has appropriate/necessary information, but also avoids information overload?

B.   Suggestion, with fairly strong agreement, that consideration be given to a "blue sky" 30-minute meeting prior to each City Council meeting. It is essential to note that this would not be viewed as "discussion time," but rather as an opportunity for Council to ask specific questions of staff, so they are better prepared when the formal meeting begins.

C.   Need to have better control over meeting start times and timeframes for intermissions.

D.   Council needs to better manage the entire process of constituent input, while also ensuring that it is easy for constituents to participate in this process.

E.   It may be useful to have enhanced executive summaries from department heads.   Specifically, make this more routine and consistent (i.e., though several members of City Council indicated that these executive summaries are, in fact, frequently included in the materials provided to Council).

The Iceberg of City Work

Vision for Future Projects:
Governing Body priorities
and goals

**Modernizing the Organization
Projects:**
Staff projects including new
initiatives for efficiency and
innovation

Water Line

The Routine Work of the City:
80 percent of what a city does is
"below the surface." Annually, the
Governing Body usually does not
need to make decisions about these
routine city services and activities.

*Adapted from the City of Tucson
by John and Carol Nalbandian*

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA
CITY COUNCIL 1996

OUR OPERATING NORMS

We Pledge....

...To place cooperation, trust, and respect at the heart of all we do.

...To behave ethically as we carry out our daily responsibilities.

...To support one another at and beyond the council table.

...To operate as an effective team, continually improving that effectiveness.

...To work for "win-win" situations instead of "win-lose."

...To actively listen, keeping an open mind, and suspending judgment.

...To stay focused and avoid tangents.

...To be pro-active in the exercise of our office.

...To do our best to answer questions posed by one another, our employees, and the community.

...To honor "discussion" before "decisions."

...To avoid discounting each other and the public by our words, gestures, body language, and "side bar" conversations.

...To be consistent in process and operation.

...To address and refer to one another by title while on the job.

...To be honest and candid with one another.

...To give and take positive feedback and coaching.

...To focus on working "with" instead of "for" or "under."

...To not take differences of opinion personally.

...To disagree agreeably and professionally.

...To realize that people make mistakes - forgive and forget.

...To realize the virtue of debate and to avoid the liability of argument.

...To realize and honor varying work styles, personalities, and process needs.

...To share information and avoid surprises.

...To minimize the practice of "sign-offs" and "ratify" when needed.

...To challenge and motivate one another.

...To maintain a sense of levity - public service should be fun as well as work.

(December 1995)

10 Habits
Of Highly Effective Councils

Carl H. Neu, Jr.

Local government operations directly affect our daily existence and experiences and the quality of life that we perceive we have within our communities. No local government deserves, nor should its citizens tolerate, a council or governing body that isn't extraordinarily effective and competent in leading the community.

Thomas Cronin, a recognized authority on public policy, defines leadership as "making things happen that might not otherwise happen and preventing things from happening that ordinarily might happen. It is a process of getting people together to achieve common goals and aspirations. Leadership is a process that helps people transform intentions into positive action, visions into reality."

The quality of leadership effectiveness demonstrated by a governing body and its ability to be a highly effective council are not attributes bestowed upon it by a swearing-in ceremony. They are the results of disciplined adherence to a set of fundamental principles and skills that characterize highly effective governing bodies. Here, then, are 10 "habits" of highly effective councils, based upon the author's observations of hundreds of governing bodies over the past 20 years.

1. Think and Act Strategically

A council's primary responsibility is not just to make policy or to do its "Roman emperor" routine (thumbs down or thumbs up) on agenda items at public meetings. It is to determine and achieve the citizens' desires for the community's future. Councils and their administrative teams must accept responsibility for shaping the future of their communities by expanding their mental horizons to identify and meet the challenges that must be addressed through decisive leadership and through shared goals for the attainment of that future.

A strategic leader always comes from the future and takes you "back to the future" from the present. This leadership adventure starts with a vision and evolves into a definition of the strategic issues that must be mastered to achieve the vision. The next step is the development of long-range goals that address these strategic issues and that provide a decision-making and budgetary basis for the successful implementation of these goals. Living from one annual budget to another and from one council meeting to the next condemns your community and its future to happenstance and to the type of thinking that often befuddles national governance and policy.

For this reason, polls show that an overwhelming majority of citizens want important issues affecting their lives to be decided at the local, home town level. Here, they expect leadership, sound thinking, and decisive action. In spite of this citizen expectation, a 1996 survey conducted by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), "Survey of Current Practice in Council-Manager Governments," indicates that fewer than 40 percent of all councils set long-term strategic goals to guide their semimonthly forays into decision making.

2. Understand and Demonstrate the Elements of Teams and Teamwork

By law, councils exist and have authority only when their members convene as bodies to do business. They also are components of corporate beings that must speak, act, and fulfill their commitments with one voice and in a mature, effective, and reliable manner. Councils are collections of diverse individuals who come together to constitute and act as an entity, and only when operating as an entity can they exercise authority and perform in fulfillment of their purpose.

This is a classic definition of "team." Carl Larson and Frank LaFasto, two preeminent authorities on teams and teamwork, define a team as an entity comprising two or more people working together to accomplish a specific purpose that can be attained only through coordinated activity among the team members. In short, a team exists to fulfill a specific function or purpose and is made up of disparate, interdependent people who collectively achieve a capacity that none of its members could demonstrate individually.

Teams always have two components that we might call their S components: *systemicness* and *synergy*. All teams are systemic by definition, being made up of interdependent parts (people) who affect each other's performance and that of the team. Synergy is the ability to achieve an effect, when working together as a team, that is more than the sum of the team members' individual efforts. While all teams are systemic, relatively few are genuinely synergistic unless their members understand, master, and demonstrate the fundamentals of teamwork, which are:

- A clear sense of purpose.
- A clear definition of the roles and relationships that unite individual talents and capacities to achieve team performance.

- Integration of members who have basic technical, interpersonal, and decision-making competence.
- A commitment to team success and performance excellence.
- A climate of trust, openness, and mutual respect.
- Clear standards of success and performance excellence.
- The support, resources, and recognition to achieve success.
- Principled and disciplined leadership.

Highly effective councils spend time building their sense of being a team and enhancing their skills in productive teamwork.
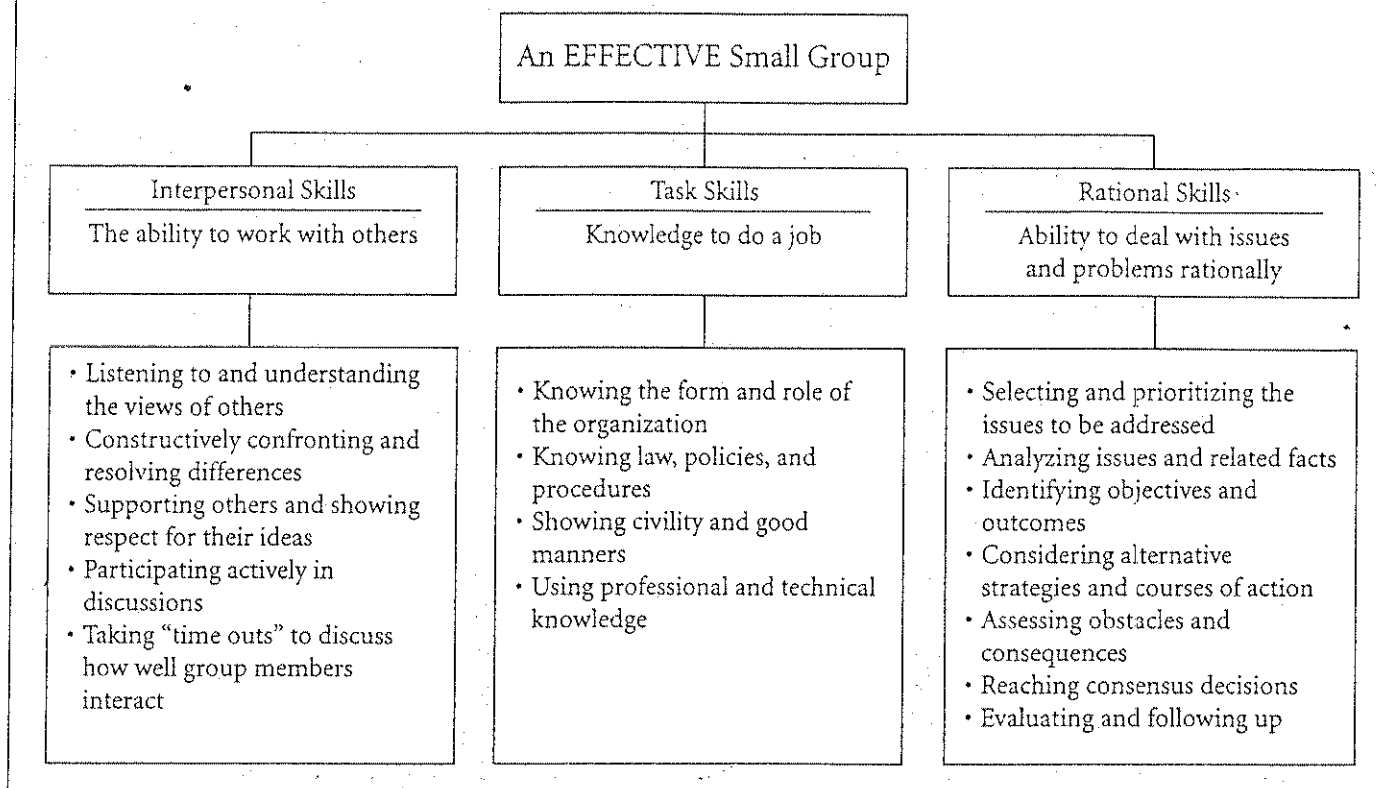
3. Master Small-Group Decision Making

Most councils are classic small groups, with fewer than a dozen people. Small groups demonstrate certain skills and behaviors that link their members together. They also have knowledge of the processes they must follow to make decisions in fulfillment of their purpose. Figure 1 summarizes the skill sets essential to small-group effectiveness.

4. Clearly Define Roles and Relationships

Each team member, whether mayor or councilmember, makes a contribution to and has a relationship with the team. Contributions and relationships must be defined in terms of the role to be assumed and how that role is to be carried out through the behavior of the person in the role.

A role has two elements: *function*, the specific responsibilities of that role, regardless of incumbency; and *performance*, the behavior of the person occupying the role in fulfilling his or her responsibilities. Councils, through charter, statute, or ordinance, have a clear definition of their function. The perfor-

Figure 1. Effective Small-Group Decision Making

An EFFECTIVE Small Group

Interpersonal Skills	Task Skills	Rational Skills ·
The ability to work with others	Knowledge to do a job	Ability to deal with issues and problems rationally

Interpersonal Skills
- Listening to and understanding the views of others
- Constructively confronting and resolving differences
- Supporting others and showing respect for their ideas
- Participating actively in discussions
- Taking "time outs" to discuss how well group members interact

Task Skills
- Knowing the form and role of the organization
- Knowing law, policies, and procedures
- Showing civility and good manners
- Using professional and technical knowledge

Rational Skills
- Selecting and prioritizing the issues to be addressed
- Analyzing issues and related facts
- Identifying objectives and outcomes
- Considering alternative strategies and courses of action
- Assessing obstacles and consequences
- Reaching consensus decisions
- Evaluating and following up

mance component must be defined within the team through discussion and mutual definition of those behaviors and practices expected of the mayor and councilmembers in the conduct of their duties and interactions.

Vince Lombardi, when asked what made a winning team, replied, "Start with the fundamentals. A player's got to know the basics of the game and how to play his [her] position. The players have to play as a team, not a bunch of individuals. The difference between mediocrity and greatness is the feeling the players have for each other," that is, their relationships. Teams talk about and define expected roles and relationships and give constructive feedback to their members on the degree to which they are fulfilling these expectations.

5 Establish and Abide by a Council-Staff Partnership

We have all heard the saying "Council makes policy, staff implements policy." Well, this is a total misconception of reality. Policy making and policy implementation are not distinct and separate

functions. Policy making/implementation is a continuum of thought and relations that transforms ideas and abstractions (visions, policies, goals, and plans) into defined, observable ends or outcomes (results, programs, buildings, streets, deliverable services). Council and staff share this continuum as partners ensuring each other's success. Each person plays an important role in making sound policies and in ensuring their effective implementation through reliable administrative practices and performance. Figure 2 depicts this partnership and continuum.

John Carver, a widely acclaimed author who writes about boards that make a difference, discusses this partnership as one in which councils define the needs to be met and the outcomes to be achieved. He believes that councils should allow staff, within council-established limits, to define the means for achieving these ends. He sees a council-staff linkage that empowers staff to do its tasks and to be evaluated on the results produced.

Councils that accept and abide by this partnership focus their energy on establishing vision, goals, and good policy and

on empowering effective staff performance. Councils that do not do this will frequently fall into micromanaging, that is, they will perceive a need to become involved in, or retain approval over, even minor staff activity and plans.

A critical element and important council task in this partnership is evaluation of the manager or administrator, based upon clearly defined goals, policies, and established guidelines on executive performance. According to the 1996 ICMA survey, only about 45 percent of all councils formally evaluate their managers' performance.
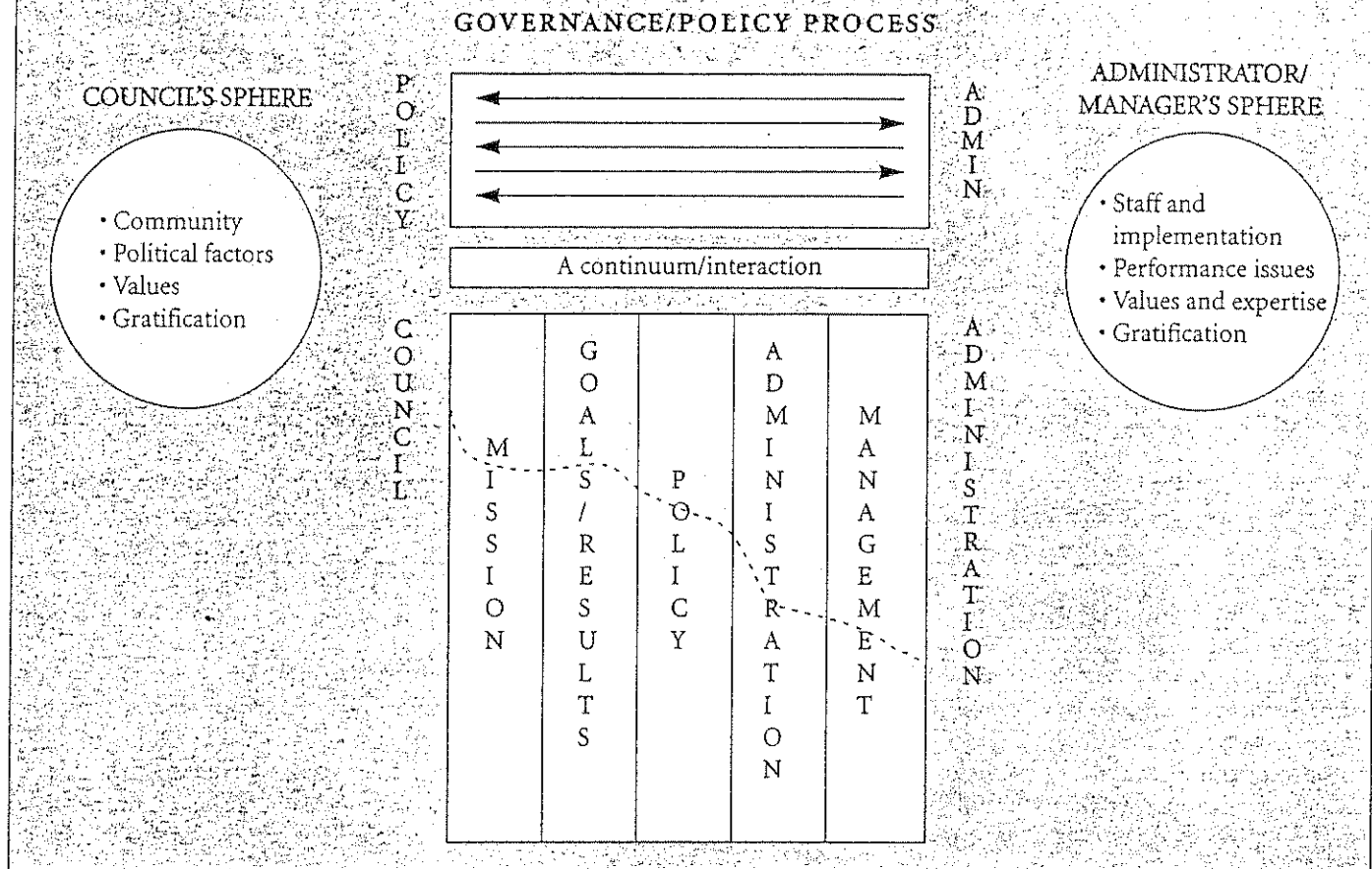
6 Make a Systematic Evaluation of Policy Implementation

Councils, like most legislative bodies, frequently exhibit the Jean Luc Picard syndrome (Star Trek II) and simply tell their staffs: "Make it·so." They assume that council action equates to policy and program implementation. The next time the council hears about policy is when a problem or crisis arises.

In contrast, highly effective councils

GOVERNANCE/POLICY PROCESS

COUNCIL'S SPHERE

- Community
- Political factors
- Values
- Gratification

ADMINISTRATOR/
MANAGER'S SPHERE

- Staff and implementation
- Performance issues
- Values and expertise
- Gratification

POLICY COUNCIL

ADMINISTRATION

A continuum/interaction

MISSION · GOALS/RESULTS · POLICY · ADMINISTRATION · MANAGEMENT

---

expect periodic feedback on policy results and on possible policy amendments that may be required. This feedback can be provided through progress reports, status memos or newsletters, and policy reviews.

7 Allocate Council Time and Energy Appropriately

Councils, like other teams, play in a number of settings or arenas to achieve overall, peak performance. There are four council-staff arenas, and each must be appreciated for its purpose and for its contribution to a council's effectiveness:

- Goal setting (retreats or "advances").
- Exploration and analysis (study sessions).
- Disposition/legislation (regular public meetings).
- Community relations (interactions with constituents and with other agencies).

Figure 3 shows the purpose, typical setting, focus, and key characteristics of each arena. All four arenas are essential to highly effective councils' fulfillment of their leadership, policy-making, goal-setting, and empowering responsibilities.

A highly effective council will hold at least one goal-setting retreat or "advance" annually. It also will hold two study sessions monthly, usually between regularly scheduled public hearings. Here, councilmembers will confer with staff and other experts on significant items under consideration that will eventually require official actions.

While these meetings should be open to the public as observers, the public should not participate in the council-staff dialogue. Many councils short-change this arena, pushing the opportunity for learning into the formal public hearing, which is not designed to promote much in-depth analysis of complex issues. The arena of *disposition/legislation* is designed to get to a vote, not to promote careful analysis of complex issues.

The fourth arena, *community relations*, is becoming more important. It is rapidly transforming the role of the council and how it spends its time. Communities today are more dependent upon sophisticated alliances and partnerships among groups, both public and private entities. Jurisdictions are subject to multiple, profound changes in how public officials operate. Today, the community arena requires more time spent in interactions outside city hall and puts greater time pressure on mayors and councilmembers.

8 Set Clear Rules and Procedures for Council Meetings

Council meetings exist for the purpose of doing the council's business. Literature on how to conduct effective and productive meetings specifies the need for an adherence to clearly defined rules and procedures.

Figure 3. Arenas for Governing Body and Staff Performance

Arena	Goal Setting	Exploration and Analysis	Disposition/ Legislation	Community Relations

Purposes	• Establish vision
	• Explore potentials
	• Set goals
	• Set direction/ priorities
	  -Community
	  -Services
	  -Staff action
	  -Budgets
		• Understanding the issue(s)
		• Problem identification
		• Selecting "best options"
		• Building commitment
			• Taking official action
			• Voting on items
			  -Resolutions
			  -Ordinances
			• Gathering public input
			• Mobilizing support
				• Interacting with constituents/citizens
				• Building alliances
				• Doing outreach and liaison
				• Coordinating with other entities

Typical Setting	Retreat or advance— informal off-site workshop	Study session— conference room	Public—formal council meeting in chambers	Numerous— diverse formats

Focuses	• Future of community
	• Evaluation of
	  -Needs
	  -Trends
	  -Strategic issues
	• Community desires and values
	• Leadership
		• Developing knowledge for decision making
		• Sorting of options
		• Examining consequences
		• Setting strategies
		• Making competent and informed decisions
			• Going through the agenda (formality)
			• Showing authority
			• Ratifiying/adopting
			• Dealing with political pressures
			• Identifying psychological needs
				• Communicating
				• Problem solving
				• Collaborating and coordinating
				• Forming partnership(s)
				• Acting as a community

Key Characteristics	• Informality • Sharing of options • Open dialogue • Creative thinking • Humor and adventure • Face-to-face/group interaction	• Starting council-staff dialogue • Questioning and testing ideas • Exchanging information • Negotiating and consensus building • No voting • Face-to-face/group interaction	• Meeting formally • Setting and following rules and procedures • Encouraging public input and involvement • Gaining high visibility • Dealing with pressure/advocacy from groups • Voting • Interacting as groups	• Being "outside" city hall • Responding to requests • Starting joint ventures • Facilitating interagency activity • Using multiple interaction modes and communication techniques

Many councils, however, drift from these rules and procedures in pursuit of informality, collegiality, and "just being nice." They let their meetings drone on with a lack of focus, redundant comments, and endless discussion.

Rules and procedures do not preclude citizen input, courtesy, or sensitivity to public concerns and viewpoints. They respect all these elements and the necessity to conduct business in an orderly, disciplined, and productive manner.

9 Get a Valid Assessment of the Public's Concerns and an Evaluation of the Council's Performance

Elections are contests among individuals vying to become members of the council. They are not valid, objective assessments of the public's feeling about the quality of the council's performance as a governing body and about whether or not it is addressing issues effectively.

Highly effective councils seek feedback through a number of market research tools such as focus groups, surveys, and questionnaires. Typically, the phone calls a councilmember receives or the comments made in public hearings are not valid or accurate reflections of the entire community's sentiments about issues and about the council's performance. "Market research feedback" should be ongoing and should be included in the annual goal-setting retreat or advance.

10 Practice Continuous Personal Learning and Development as a Leader

Leaders read, attend workshops, and constantly seek information, understanding, and insight. Highly effective councils are composed of members who honestly know they don't know it all. They take advantage of the myriad of opportunities to learn and to perfect their skills by reading, going to state and national municipal league workshops, and attending every forum that can expand their skills to lead and govern well.

A highly effective council also learns as a council. It works closely with the manager to improve its leadership skills and the council-manager relationship, assessing objectively its performance on each of the 10 habits. This assessment should include the observations of councilmembers, manager, department heads, and selected members of the community who have occasion to work and interact with councilmembers. The effective council should decide where gains can be made, then set up the opportunity through council workshops to learn the skills needed to make these gains.

In 1990, Mayor Margaret Carpenter and City Manager Jack Ethredge of Thornton, Colorado, began a process with Thornton's council to increase the council's leadership skills and effectiveness that incorporated the 10 habits described in this article.

First, the council conducted a careful reexamination of the city's mission and the role that it had to assume to ensure fulfillment of that mission. Then, in discussions with the city manager, councilmembers made a commitment to leadership innovation and excellence that focused on long-term and strategic issues vital to the community's future. The process involved advances, close attention to community feedback through focus groups and surveys, and frequent self-evaluation of both council's and staff's

performance and sense of partnership.

Now, the council holds multiple advances each year to define and validate its strategic perspective and policy leadership. Skill development workshops accompany these advances and focus on defined needs that are identified by councilmembers. Specific "time-outs" are taken to evaluate how the council is functioning as a team, as well as how it functions with staff and with the community. The continuous quest for effectiveness always begins with the question "Is there

more we should be doing to improve our leadership performance and to ensure a quality future for our community?"

As Jack Ethredge observes: "The entire process has helped Thornton's council to identify the issues that are essential to achieving our community's goals and to building collaborative relationships with citizens and with staff to agree about the goals. Thornton now is a community of partnerships, all focusing on a vision and using our combined resources to become the city we want to be in the future. There has been a real breakthrough in the amount of creative energy that is moving Thornton forward."

The last, and probably most important, point: Keep your sense of humor. Governance is a serious business dealing with the vital issues affecting our communities and the quality of life we experience within them. But humor reduces friction and stress, lets others know that we and they are human, and brings a pause that refreshes our insight and commitment. It is essential to forging and maintaining good relationships.

Every community deserves nothing less than a highly effective council that embraces accountability for the community's performance in creating its future and in effectively addressing, in the present, those challenges vital to attaining that future. That is what is at stake: our communities' future. With few exceptions, every council can be highly effective and can provide strong leadership, but to become effective will require a good governance model and disciplined adherence to the fundamental habits of effectiveness. [PM]

How to be an Effective City Council Member

by John Nalbandian

Since I was elected to the city commission in Lawrence just over a year ago I have been collecting thoughts about what it is like to be a new member of the governing body. I have divided my observations into four areas: dealing with citizens, governing body-staff relations, city commission operations, and personal suggestions.

Dealing With Citizens

- Citizens have the right to expect consistency in policy and in the application of laws and administrative regulations. You can accomplish this in part by respecting the work of past commissions and commissioners unless you are deliberately trying to undo what a previous commission has done.
- Remember, ordinances are laws; they are not resolutions or policies. Before you grant an exception to an ordinance (and you will be asked to do that fairly often), make sure you have a good reason that you can defend publicly. Exceptions to an ordinance that seem like a good idea now become in the future stories that people tell about political favoritism. How would you feel if you learned that the state legislature or Congress had exempted an individual from a state or federal law?
- Citizen-advocates will not ask you to inform them. They want to tell you what is right; they do not want to hear the other side of the story. You must listen to all sides, and this puts you in a unique position in your community.
- Treating each citizen individually and with compassion is just like treating each of your children without regard to the other. In the case of the city, it leads to perceptions of political favoritism and inequity.
- Listen to citizens but remember that you are not a punching bag or a reservoir for verbal abuse. Do not be afraid to tell citizens they have been discourteous.

Governing Body - Staff Relations

- The lines between policy-making and administration often are difficult to define clearly. It is imperative for the governing body and staff to discuss the relationship if it seems to be a problem.
- Recognize that whenever you ask staff to do something for you, you are taking away from the work they would otherwise be doing.
- Staff could run the city for a long period of time without the governing body. If you don't believe it, spend a half day in the city manager's or city clerk's office observing what they do. See how much of the city's work does not involve the governing body.
- Your oversight role conflicts with the partnership that it takes between staff and elected officials to accomplish the city's work effectively. You have to decide which role is more important to you.
- Remember, professional engineers and planners have already had every conversation about streets, traffic control, and planning that you will have on the council. Do not try to out-plan the planners or out-engineer the engineers. Be careful about rejecting professional advice unless you are able to articulate a sound non-professional reason for doing so.
- Do not try to learn as much as staff does on an issue. You can't. Invite staff to share with you their goals or the way they see things so that you can begin to trust them.
- Remember that few professional staff understand the elected official's world. Don't be afraid to share your world with them if they seem interested.
- Know your form of government. Read the charter. It is your constitution, and it will help you understand your role and responsibilities, as well as the mayor's and staff's.
- It is OK to ask staff if you individually and the governing body generally are helping or hindering staff fulfill its responsibilities. Likewise, do not be afraid to let staff know how they are doing.
- Staff has dealt with dozens of governing body members and seen some problems over and over so they forget that you are a novice. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

City Commission Operations

- Do not introduce issues during a meeting that have not been put on the agenda in advance. This surprises people. If it is important enough to talk about, get it on the agenda so people can give your idea some advanced thought. Prepare a memo to accompany the agenda to let the other commissioners know about your issue and interest.
- I am in favor of the governing body spending time away from city hall trying to evaluate its work or developing a legislative agenda. If you choose to review the work of the governing body, don't be afraid the following questions: "What are we doing poorly?" and, "If we could change anything about the way we conduct our business, what would

long term goals and issues you want to deal with in the next year. Get control of the city's political agenda rather than letting staff determine what the city commission will address. I'll bet that over 80 percent of your agenda is determined by citizens and staff. How can a governing body convey to citizens what it is about and what it is trying to accomplish if it is constantly dealing with other people's issues?

- The governing body has to act as a unit otherwise, staff gets confused and very cautious. Develop trust by: sharing information, being open to the ideas of other members of the governing body, and by not trying to control what other commissioners think or do.
- Make use of retreats and parliamentary procedure when you have a conflictual governing body.

Personal

- Be able to shake hands at the beginning of each meeting and

effectiveness of a governing body, in part on how its members conduct themselves during the meeting.

- Recognize that a lot of your frustration as a member of the governing body is simply a reflection of who you are and how you personally are most comfortable dealing with issues.
- Don't get a big ego over the respect/deference staff will show you. They are demonstrating their respect for the office you hold, not necessarily for you.
- Don't do it or say it if you aren't willing to read about it in the newspaper.
- The impression citizens form of a member of the governing body does not happen instantly, so don't worry about the impression you leave after each issue.
- Don't expect to be interested in everything that comes before the governing body. It is appropriate to defer to other members of the governing body if they seem more

you do. You do not have to express an opinion about every issue.

- Find issues you are interested in the governing body pursuing, and then get the other commissioner's to agree to deal with them. The outcomes may not be what you want, but at least the city will have dealt with your issues.
- Try to learn from the experienced commissioners and from staff. If you genuinely want help, there are lots of people to help you.
- Try to enjoy yourself; it's a unique experience being on the front lines of democracy.
- A lot of people talk about political leadership. In my mind leadership often requires doing the unpopular, and every so often I remind myself of my leadership responsibilities by reciting the following pledge: I pledge to express ideas that need to be heard, to act in ways that need to be seen, and to pursue virtues that need to be sought.

League Staff

Executive Director Announces League Staff Changes

On July 1, 1992 Chris McKenzie, Executive Director of the League of Kansas Municipalities, announced two staff changes of note to League member cities and research subscribers. Jim Kaup, General Counsel, will be leaving his League staff position and joining the law firm of Gilmore & Bell, opening its first Topeka branch office. Jim Kaup has been with the League staff since late 1981. McKenzie also announced the retirement of Esther M. Chester, Accountant, who has been with the League since 1967.

Commenting on Jim Kaup's departure, McKenzie stated: "Jim recently informed me that he had the opportunity to join the law firm of Gilmore & Bell but that he was reluctant to end his decade long affiliation with the League. I am very pleased that with the support of the League governing body Jim will continue to serve as General Counsel for the League while he is with Gilmore & Bell. This will provide him the opportunity to continue serving Kansas cities, but in a slightly different capacity. His duties will focus on major court cases and legislation with which the League becomes involved.
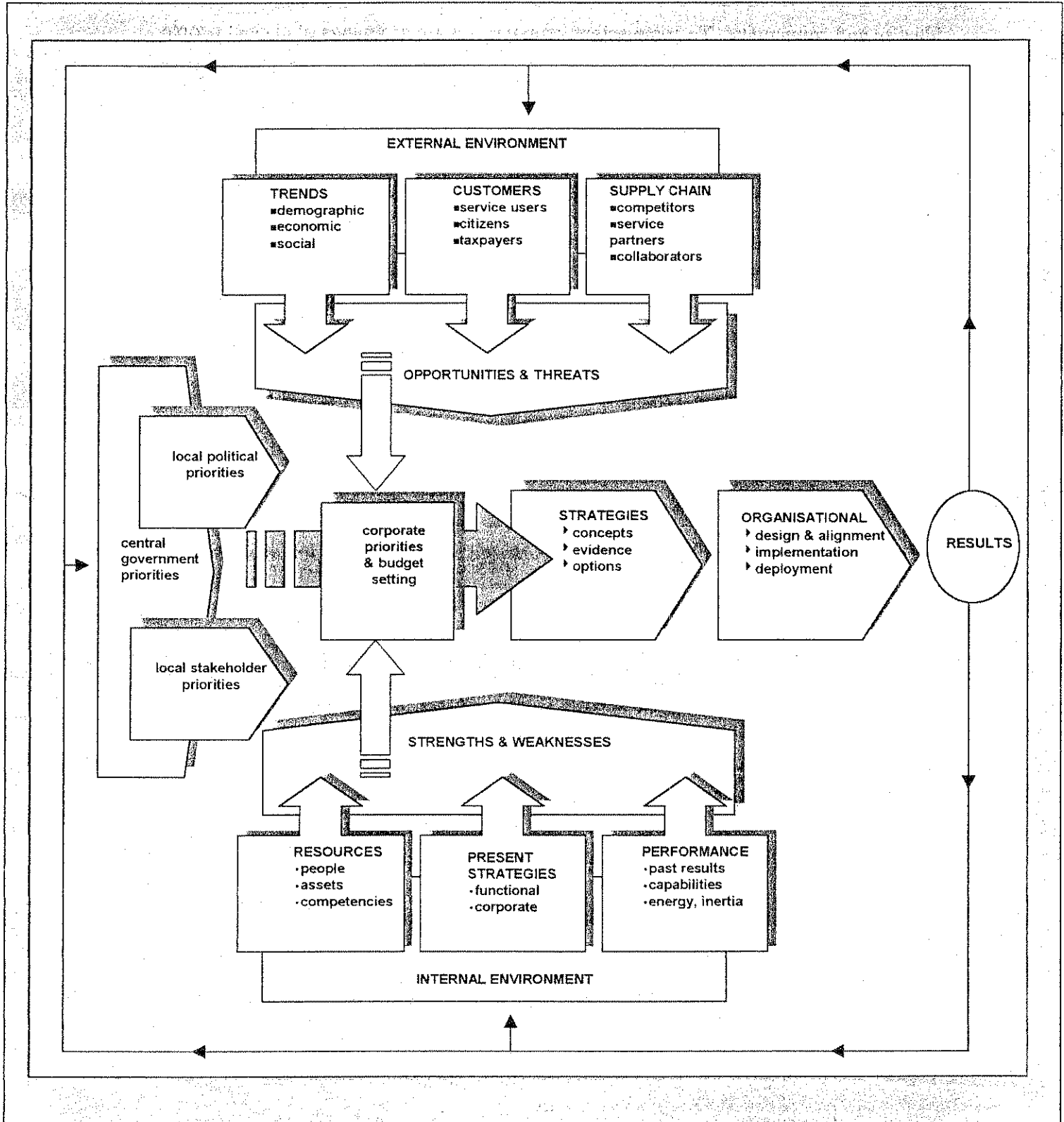
"During the next month we will be bringing a new attorney on board who, with Don Moler's help and advice, will help maintain our basic level of legal advisory services to the League's member cities and research subscribers. I feel confident Jim's services in his new capacity will strengthen the Leagues effectiveness in both the court system and the legislature," McKenzie said.

Esther M. Chester, Accountant, joined the League staff in 1967. She has served as the League's Accountant since that time.

McKenzie observed, "Esther has been an incredible resource to the League, its member cities and research subscribers, the League staff since 1967. She is known among the League staff for her loyal and dedicated service during that time. She will be missed, but her retirement is well earned."

Lisa McKinnon, presently a management analyst with the Kansas Department of Administration, will be joining the League staff on July 20, 1992 as business manager. Recruitment for a staff attorney is presently underway.

The diagram below encapsulates the strategic framework within which the whole Council approaches the complex task of aligning competing priorities, pressures and capabilities. It emphasises the complexity of achieving purposeful direction while maintaining a focus on results.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

TRENDS
- demographic
- economic
- social

CUSTOMERS
- service users
- citizens
- taxpayers

SUPPLY CHAIN
- competitors
- service partners
- collaborators

OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS

local political priorities

central government priorities

local stakeholder priorities

corporate priorities & budget setting

STRATEGIES
- concepts
- evidence
- options

ORGANISATIONAL
- design & alignment
- implementation
- deployment

RESULTS

STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

RESOURCES
- people
- assets
- competencies

PRESENT STRATEGIES
- functional
- corporate

PERFORMANCE
- past results
- capabilities
- energy, inertia

INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Politics	Administration
I. Expectations elected officials have of staff. What does the governing body expect of staff? 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.	**II. Expectations staff has of elected officials.** What does staff expect of the governing body? 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.
III. Contributions of the governing body to staff. What will the governing body give/contribute to staff? 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.	**IV. Contributions of the staff to the governing body.** What will the staff contribute/give to the governing body? 1 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

John Nalbandian, University of Kansas

Staff Summary

September 17, 2002

TO: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: John Szerlag, City Manager
             Lori Grigg-Bluhm, City Attorney
             Laura Fitzpatrick, Assistant to the City Manager

SUBJECT: Recap of the 9/6-7/02 City Council Retreat: *The High-Performance
             Governing Body*

Here is a list of comments that arose at the retreat. They represent assignments and
topics for future discussion. Staff proposes a November study session to discuss these
items. An asterisk indicates that proposed drafts of that element will be presented for
consideration.

Attachment one contains easel paper notes from the retreat. These notes include lists
of council meeting characteristics and governing body/staff expectations.

For your convenience also find a binder containing all handouts and notes from the
retreat.

1. **Pre-Council Meeting "Technical Review" Sessions (originally referred to as
   "Blue Sky Meetings"):** Arrange for City Council and department heads to meet
   before its regularly scheduled meeting for the second meeting in September and
   both meetings in October. These three meetings are being held for the purposes
   of trying "technical review" sessions. They are public meetings. Per discussions
   on 9/16/02, Technical Review meetings will commence at 6:45PM in the Council
   Conference Room and adjourn in time to start the regular Council Meeting at
   7:30PM in Chambers.

   Adoption of this practice will be re-visited at the second meeting in December
   and will be considered based on the results of the three trial meetings and the
   schedules of Council members.

2. ***City Council Pledge:** Draft a City Council pledge similar to the one from Cedar
   Rapids (see handout). This pledge may appear in the agenda book, on a wall
   plaque, and/or on the web site.

The second page of the attached notes contains preliminary suggestions for the pledge. Staff recommends adopting a City Council Pledge by the end of the year.

Will the City Council Pledge appear in Rules and Procedures?

3. *Revise Information at Beginning of the Agenda Booklet

4. ***Clarification of Meeting Protocol and Protocol Officer**
   a. Protocol: Mayor's Statement ("Our meetings shall proceed as follows...")
   b. Protocol Officer: Implement a Protocol Officer
      i. Rules & Procedures will be amended if a protocol officer becomes a permanent fixture.
      ii. A protocol officer will be appointed at each meeting.
      iii. Define expectations and duties of protocol officer, including whether s/he will have a bell
      iv. Determine a way for the protocol officer to see the timer clock.

5. **Discussion of Vision**
   Time Should be Set Aside to Discuss the Vision for the City: This could be at a study session and/or during regularly scheduled meetings.

6. **Time to Discuss How City Council Conducts its Business**: Nalbandian recommended that City Council should set aside time to periodically discuss how it conducts its business for purposes of monitoring progress (self-assessment).

7. **Councilmember Speaking Signal**: Develop a signal so that the Mayor can tell when someone on Council wants to speak (i.e. a light bar, etc.)

8. **Visual References (Maps):** Make visual references (i.e. maps) more easy-to-see for viewers in the audience and at home. Provide visual references more often so that issues are put in a geographic context.

9. **Refer Citizen Concerns to Staff**

10. **Public Comment:**
    Add this phrase to the agenda booklet:
    No person not a member shall be permitted to speak more than once or for more than five minutes unless permitted by the chair or queried by a councilmember.

11. **Place the corresponding goal/objective next to agenda items.**

12. **Be more diligent in using the 4th Monday for study sessions.**

13. Find a way to limit public comment speakers from monopolizing the meeting.

14. Executive summaries on complex issues are appreciated.

15. Post City Goals and Objectives so they are visible to everyone at the meeting.

16. *Create a handout of "tips for presenting to Council." These tips could appear on the back of speaker cards, or on a wall sign.

Conducting More Effective Meetings

Nalbandian asked councilmembers to list characteristics of a **good meeting**

Issue	# of Participants who Listed this as a Major Issue
Professionalism & respect	
Debating without impugning	
Appropriate use of language	
Count to "10" when under stress	
Rule for engagement	
Hold off on decision until fully explored	
Win-win situations	
No surprises	
Professionalism – expectations about Council comments; appropriate conflict resolution; debating vs. arguing (orderly discussion)	5
No surprises	1
Managing citizen involvement – expectations of those making comment	
Respect courtesy among council/staff/citizens	4
Time Management – start on time	

Nalbandian asked councilmembers to list characteristics of a **bad meeting** & then asked all participants to indicate (by placing a check mark) which characteristics are the biggest issues

Issue	# of Participants who Listed this as a Major Issue
"Debate" with staff and citizens	7
Problem solving on the spot	
Role of Mayor as chair of meeting	1
Respect all sides of issues	
Council debate w/out citizen comments	3
Citizen decorum	
Focus on issues, not individuals	
Focus on interests/goals/objectives rather than defending positions	4
Some decisions drag on	
Council regulars monopolizing	3

Councilmember Suggestions for a Pledge
(similar to the one from Cedar Rapids, IA handout)

Our Pledge

- To communicate & show respect for other councilmembers
- To demonstrate in word and action respect for staff
- To take individual responsibility for decorum – speak up
- The Mayor will be attentive to councilmembers wishing to speak
- To encourage solutions to citizen problems through staff
- To keep debate with citizens at a minimum
- To enforce rules about citizen comment at meetings

"Expectations" Brainstorming Session

Relationship Between Governing Body and Staff

Goal: To establish an agreed upon list of governing body and staff expectations of one another.
Method: Governing body and staff each list expectations the one group has of the other, including areas of concern.

Expectations Elected Officials Have of Staff (Listed by City Council)
What does the governing body expect of staff?

Expectation	Seen by Councilmembers as Being Best Executed	Seen by Councilmembers as an Area that needs Improvement
Facts/Information in manageable form	1	1
Proposed actions/solutions	5	
Perform all necessary services	5	
Courteous & informative behavior @ point of service as well as with Council	2	4
Strict ethics guided by compassion	2	
Openness and commitment to organizational evolution	3	1
Candid & complete information when council decision is needed	2	2

Contributions of the Staff to the Governing Body (Listed by Staff)
What will the staff contribute/give to the Governing Body?

Contribution
Allocate resources efficiently & effectively
Provide sufficient & objective information
Educate through expertise
Relieve councilmembers from day-to-day operational concerns
Implement goals of City Council
Be professional – stay current on state-of-the-art solutions to modern day challenges & communicate &/or implement processes
Political neutrality – people/policies
Give credit to Council when they initiate a positive vision or project for the community
Respond to concerns of residents & councilpersons in a respectful & efficient manner

Expectations Staff Has of Elected Officials (Listed by Staff)
What does staff expect of the governing body?

Expectation	Seen by Staff as Being Best Executed	Seen by Staff as an Area that needs Improvement
Strong leaders on policy making -recognize the great city in which we live & work		
Provide inspiration with vision for the community		2
Understand roles of Council & Administration	2	
Advocate for administration & their professional abilities (Don't shoot the messenger.)		1
Provide resources to meet community needs and values	2	
Commitment to established goals & previous resolutions	1	1
Regular, clear & concise communication	2	
Promote City by setting a positive example	1	
Appoint board/committee members who will make positive contributions to the City		

Contributions of the Governing Body to Staff (Listed by City Council)
What will the governing body give/contribute to staff?

Contribution
Provide training opportunities
Provide tools to increase efficiency & provide services
Competitive compensation
Clear goals & objectives; consistent direction to staff
Provide fiscal resources
Respect and express appreciation for work efforts, expertise, and professionalism
Willingness to engage in long-term planning/vision